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**Maule's Letter to the Ohio Yearly Meeting**

**1857**

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*For B. V. S. dup*

A LETTER

ADDRESSED TO THE

CLERK AND MEMBERS

OF

OHIO YEARLY MEETING.

BY

JOSHUA MAULE.

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COLERAIN, OHIO.

1857.

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*Gift of  
James O. Easton  
1888*

**TO THE MEMBERS OF OHIO YEARLY MEETING.**

The substance of the following Letter was some time since addressed to the Clerk of the Yearly Meeting. It is now submitted by the writer to the *members*, with the earnest desire that we may individually inquire into those things that have come to pass in our days, and ponder them in our hearts.

# LETTER.



*Colerain, Ohio, 10th mo. 30th, 1857.*

DEAR FRIEND, BENJAMIN HOYLE,—

Believing our Christian profession, and in an especial manner the present condition of our Yearly Meeting, requires our individual faithfulness to apprehended duty, I think it right to address thee in relation thereto; not with any feeling of enmity; for I have nothing against thee personally and as a man: but against thy course and action in the Church, (of which its members have a right to speak and judge,) I have a controversy, and think it best to bring it plainly to thyself.

I believe our late Yearly Meeting was favored with a measure of the cementing and gathering influence of the Head of the Church, very soon after it was opened on Second day morning, and while it was deliberating upon the serious subject of receiving the Friend that was with us from another Yearly Meeting in the important station of a gospel minister. And in and under that influence the meeting came to a deliberate, clear judgment, largely expressed, to receive and read his certificate; there was no discussion, not one interposing voice of dissent, while the meeting quietly settled in this decision. Thou first opposed it, and objected to reading his certificates, and yet told us thou hadst "sympathy and near unity with the Friend, and believed he was anointed for the work," &c. In this, several joined thee (who always evince a readiness

to follow where thou leadest,) and expressed their unity with the Friend and his services; some of them saying, they believed he was with us in "right authority;" but they rejected his certificates, for the reason given by thyself, that we were not in correspondence with the meeting that had issued them. Who or what has prevented us from being in correspondence with that Yearly Meeting which sends to us "anointed ministers," "clothed with right authority"? By *what authority* do we reject the "rightly anointed," as thou and others rejected the proper order and evidence of this Friend's concern? Why do we refuse to own fellowship with meetings which have judged of the concern, and liberated those who are "anointed by the Master"? For this Friend's concern was laid before, and fully approved by, the select Yearly Meeting of New York. Do we believe the Head of the Church sends his "anointed ministers" through a corrupt channel? "Thou art the man" who hast to the utmost of thy ability, and thy authority has more than anything else, prevented our Yearly Meeting from being in correspondence with that of New York, [held at Poplar Ridge,] and now thou givest this as a reason for rejecting their ministers, who are clothed with right authority and "anointed for the work!" What a mockery this makes of our profession of being led and guided, in transacting the affairs of the Church, by the "spirit of truth!" The friend informed the meeting, that his certificates explained his concern as something further than attending the Yearly Meeting; but as they had been refused, and his friends at home rejected, he did not know but he might be at liberty now to go home, (or to this effect.) This brought his opposers to a strait place; they must either take the responsibility of sending home one clothed with "right authority," without performing the service that authority required of him, or they must authorize him to prosecute his concern. This they did, con-

trary to our discipline and established order, which required the concern to be laid before the meeting by reading his certificate. They urged him to remain, and perform any service, attend and appoint meetings, &c., as he believed right. In this thou wast silent. Friends who have no cause but the truth to support, are never placed in such positions as this by their own acts.

Thy course in regard to correspondence was, I believe, equally subversive of the unity and harmony of the Society, and as opposed to the truth as the foregoing. Thou refused to acknowledge Friends of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, (who stood on the ground we did, and whom, I have understood, thou saidst after their separation, "thou couldst own if thou couldst own thyself,") and rejected their epistle which was on the table, because, as thou hast said in our Yearly Meeting, "they had corresponded with New York and New England, and we might as well correspond with them all." There was no evidence before the meeting that this was the case; but thou hadst heard it out of doors; and no evidence, if they had done it, that the truth had not required it of them. But thou refused to read their epistle, [the epistle from the "smaller body" of Baltimore, held at Nottingham,] because thou *hadst heard* they had done something which thou didst not like. The excellent recommendation of our discipline is, that in transacting the affairs of the Church, we should be "careful to move and act under the immediate influence of the spirit of Christ, in the pure love of the Gospel." According to my measure, I have earnestly desired we might individually be made willing to be governed by His spirit, and leaving the "Lo here's and lo there's," seek for and wait for the arising of that light and life in our meetings, which would enable us to come to true judgment.

Thou again brought before the meeting those charges so often reiterated by thee against those bodies of Friends



who have stood faithful for our doctrines and testimonies, and of whom our Yearly Meeting has officially declared, "we believe they are endeavoring to maintain the same testimonies we are called upon to uphold." This has been continued and repeated in our Yearly Meeting, until it seems to me, (to use thy own words in the Yearly Meeting on another subject,) it has become a "loathsome disease." It always produces discussion and debate, and destroys whatever feeling of solemnity the meeting may be favored with. Taking the ground and using *the words* so often used, and so *much worn* by the Separatists, thou made that remarkable assertion, "that doctrines had nothing to do with the separation in New England, it was a mere matter of discipline!"

But thou saidst the "small body" was right in the Monthly Meeting, and right in the Quarterly Meeting, but wrong in the Yearly Meeting, because the Yearly Meeting concluded to leave it to the representatives from the other Quarters to decide which was the true Quarter of Rhode Island, and Friends refused to abide by the decision of the representatives. In leaving it to the representatives, I understood thee to include the whole meeting, and to condemn sound Friends because they did not afterwards submit to the *decision* of the representatives. Our Friends did not submit it to the representatives; and I have before heard thee censure them for *refusing* to submit it to them. Those representatives were expressly appointed by the influence of those who had supported the unsound doctrines of Joseph John Gurney, laid waste their discipline, made the separation, and *were wrong*, thou sayest, in the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings. That which was right in principle could not be altered by numbers in the Yearly Meeting. The essential truths of our religion and the necessity of adhering to our discipline, cannot be changed by the accident of the clerk of a meeting going for or against them, or by the

numbers who act with him. There has been much made of that paragraph in the Philadelphia "Report of the Facts and Causes," which speaks of the "organization of a Yearly Meeting." I think, and feel safe in asserting, that Friends did not "organize a Yearly Meeting." The separation was not (primarily) there; and that "Report" has clearly proved, as thou asserted, that the separation was made in the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings. The Separatists then went up to the Yearly Meeting with sound Friends; and having the power there, they endeavored to rule the sound and true members; and he who had been Clerk identified himself with those who had made the separation, and a large proportion of those assembled acted with him. But Friends maintained their integrity, and *conducted the Yearly Meeting* consistently with its original establishment, and in the order of their discipline. The Separatists having possession of that house, Friends had to hold the Yearly Meeting in another place. This they did, by regularly and in strict accordance with their discipline appointing the Friend Clerk whose name was brought in by the representatives, and adjourning the meeting to another house. "There was no other way." Will any claim that the principle which was right in the meeting below, became wrong when it reached the Yearly Meeting, because they that were against it were more than they that were for it? This would as well apply to the founders of our Society, and to all who have endeavored to maintain the truth against greater numbers in error, as to the members of New England Yearly Meeting. It is this sad attempt to show that the right became wrong when it got up to the Yearly Meeting, and that those who had conscientiously maintained the truth should there have given it into the hands of their opposers, that has bewildered many and beclouded the truth. It is this that mars the influence and value of that otherwise able and excellent

“Report of Facts and Causes,” which so clearly proved that the “smaller body” were the true Society, and were faithful in maintaining our doctrines, testimonies and discipline ; and that it was the defenders and supporters of Joseph John Gurney who made the separation. After doing this so fully, and establishing it in accordance with the facts, another and different spirit seems suddenly to have influenced the writers of that book ; and they say, “The manner in which this separation was effected was not such as we think affords a precedent safe to be followed in the organization of a Yearly Meeting.”

This paragraph was made more account of by the supporters of Gurneyism in our Yearly Meeting than all the rest of the book, and continues to be so used by their successors still among us.

It seems to be designed to throw the odium of the separation on sound Friends, even after having proved that they were right and did not make it. I have approached this matter with caution : I feel the responsibility I incur by commenting on the work of those who are so looked up to by many as authority in the Society. I think I am sensible that “my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.” Yet it is necessary we should all remember, the truth is greater than the greatest men.

Thy history of the *Hicksite* separation in Baltimore, by which thou endeavored to condemn Friends of New England, was remarkable. That separation was done regularly and in order, thou informed us, and not made until all the other Yearly Meetings advised in their epistles that Friends should pursue that course. The facts are, that no epistles were sent from New England, New York, or Philadelphia, to Baltimore that year. Some of the other epistles bore a testimony against Hicksism ; but not one, I believe, advised Friends to pursue the course they did. There was no form or order as to organization. Friends notified one another,

and met in the evening at a Friend's house, and there concluded to invite such as were opposed to the proceedings of the Hicksites, to meet at a school-house obtained for the purpose. Friends met in the appointed place *without that outward* form and order which thou so zealously endeavored to show was the *cause* of their being acknowledged by the Society. But I have no doubt it was *in the order* of the *unchangeable truth* in which the Society was first gathered. I think thou canst not have read the history of that separation lately; it is in the second volume of "The Friend." Failing in this to condemn New England Friends, thou told the meeting they ought to have remained where they were, that is, in connection with those who had departed from the faith of the Society! To confirm this, thou quoted the text, "The scribes and pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all therefore they bid you observe, that observe and do, but do not ye after their works," &c. Was not this command given during the time of fulfilment of the Mosaic law? of which it was also said by the Great Head of the Church, that "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away till all be fulfilled"? Was it not somewhat straining the application of the text, to apply it to Christians in our day, that they should submit in matters of conscience to the "scribes and pharisees"? of whom the Saviour also said, "they were blind guides:" "Ye pay tithe of mint, and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith:" "Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." Are we not under that dispensation, and to be governed by that authority, of which the apostles spoke when they were commanded "not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus"?—"but Peter and John answered and said unto them, whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." My

desire is that Friends may be everywhere encouraged, humbly to seek for ability and true wisdom, by which they may be mercifully enabled to stand faithful to our Christian testimonies, and strive to follow the example of those eminent apostles, Peter and John, in preference to the course thou sayest should be adopted, to obey the "scribes and pharisees." Had George Fox and his co-laborers made the application which thou hast of that text, and governed their actions by it, there had never been a Society of Friends. Thou and those acting with thee continue in refusing to let a testimony go against those offenders who have forsaken our testimonies, violated our discipline, and for years have not attended our religious meetings. To confirm and establish this rule and others of similar character, which have been pressed upon the meeting, thou explained the principle we must be governed by; that a rule of action might be adopted by the concurrence of a part of the meeting, but it could not be dropped or changed only by the unanimous voice of the meeting! These rules, so firmly fixed, are the measures pursued by those who act with thyself in relation to correspondence, certificates of ministers, treating with offenders, &c., none of which have been adopted by the unity of the meeting, but by a few who have evinced a determination to make their acts and decisions appear to be the acts of the body. Those rules, thus laid down to govern our meetings, are altogether at variance with the profession we make of waiting for, and seeking to be directed by, the mind of Truth, what we should do and what we should leave undone. These rules are now sought to be extended to Iowa, to give substantial evidence to faithful Friends there that we reject them, and are endeavoring to build up a partition wall between them and Friends around them, by refusing to certify our members who go thither, to their meetings; but the rule is to set up separate meetings among them, which, thou told the Yearly Meet-

ing, would not be in connection with the meetings of Friends there, but are to be accountable to Stillwater Monthly Meeting, Ohio. It would have been more consistent with the precepts of the gospel, to have endeavored to strengthen and encourage them [sound and faithful Friends of the "smaller body" in Iowa] in the right support of the law and the testimony, and to have labored in love to gather them nearer to one another, in the bonds of Christian fellowship; instead of encouraging divisions among them, by setting up separate meetings. These plans and rules appear intended to be as comprehensive as were those made in the days of "Mordecai the Jew." The letters have gone forth among us, some written by those in authority in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, to the same class in ours, advising "that our Yearly Meeting should not *strike hands* with any other bodies of professors, however much they might feel themselves aggrieved." And the writing was circulated for the rejection of all the bodies of sound Friends, as it was formerly against the whole people of Mordecai.

It was a very painful and suffering Yearly Meeting to many honest-hearted Friends. It seemed that "the whole head was sick, and the whole heart faint;" yet out of this diseased state we are sending down to subordinate meetings a long minute of well expressed words of advice; and perhaps not a word will appear in our minutes to show our actual state, and the travail and living concern of a large portion of the members for the consistent support of our established order. This course may deceive others, and perhaps ourselves, but it will not help any.

If I have quoted any of thy expressions wrongly, I am open to correction. I have no desire to place thee in any position but such as I honestly believe thou hast placed thyself in. It is with sorrow I write, exceedingly regretting there should be cause for writing these things. But I believe the truth requires it, and our condition demands

it. I have craved it might be better done, but we seem to sleep, many of us, amid the dangers that surround us. The earnest desires of my heart are, that we might individually seek, in great earnestness and sincerity of soul, to have the "waste places restored;" and laying aside every device and contrivance of our own will and wisdom, that we might look unto the "Healer of Breaches" alone for help, and wait upon Him for counsel and direction; and if we do truly come here, we may yet be permitted in mercy to experience the words of the prophet to Jerusalem to be applicable unto us: "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid."

Thy sincere friend,

JOSHUA MAULE.

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A letter addressed to the Clerk and  
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